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Governor Bill Walker  
STATE OF ALASKA

May 26, 2017

The Honorable Ryan Zinke  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke:

The Department of Interior (DOI) should review and re-open the administrative land management plans for the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A) to ensure that its enabling legislation is being complied with and that the nation has access to its petroleum resources. There are two critical reasons why this review is timely – there is an increasing need for community access and connection that should be recognized by the federal government, and the Petroleum Reserve is seeing its first petroleum production in almost a century. Undertaking this review is a priority for Alaska, and we will make every effort to provide the State's support and input.

Regarding access and connectivity, communities across the western North Slope are evaluating how infrastructure may improve subsistence access, cultural ties, costs for goods and services, and economic opportunities. These are matters where the local communities may have differing needs, approaches, and perspectives, but they all require a federal land manager that evaluates the cumulative benefits of community infrastructure in the NPR-A rather than prohibiting any activity that has even an incidental impact.

We are also now seeing the first petroleum production from the petroleum reserve. It is imperative to the State that the significant benefits of this development activity are recognized and reflected in the federal management of the NPR-A. It is also necessary that the federal government have a plan in place to continue to foster this development, build out infrastructure, and support economic activity going forward. As the State has frequently raised, the federal management of this area must recognize its petroleum potential and the existing legal intent that it be available for petroleum production.

In light of these needs, the State is undertaking its own effort to review infrastructure opportunities across the North Slope with the development of our Arctic Strategic Transportation and Resources (ASTAR) vision plan. Part of this plan will be engaging with local stakeholders across the North Slope to assess how connectivity benefits their lives and improves their economic opportunities. The plan will also build on the frequent comments we have submitted about federal management and the

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current plans in place for the petroleum reserve. We are making every effort to coordinate the development of ASTAR with local communities, and we will share our knowledge of the resources and community perspectives in the region to aid any federal review.

Thank you again for making Alaska and access to its vast resources a priority in your work as Secretary. We respectfully request that you prioritize this issue on behalf of our state and our country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Bill Walker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bill" and last name "Walker" clearly distinguishable.

Bill Walker  
Governor